

New trail and bird blind at Chatfield Wetlands

Thanks to Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado—project completed in one day

It was a chilly, overcast morning on September 24, but that did not stop Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. Over 150 people volunteered to spend their Saturday building a new trail and bird blind at the Chatfield Wetlands. By 4 p.m. the crusher fine trail (about 1/3 mile loop) was complete and the last boards were nailed onto the blind. As if that wasn't enough, volunteers also planted about 1,200 native wetland plants.

We are extremely grateful to Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Colorado State Parks for helping making this project a reality. This new trail is part of Phase 2 of the Audubon Center development. ASGD has already presented a teacher's workshop on wetland ecology and environmental education at the site! This spring we will be introducing school children to the magic of wetlands through school field trips.

If you are hiking at the Audubon

Center at Chatfield, check out our new trail. Because the wetlands are a sensitive wildlife area, we just ask that you stay on trail—taking only photos and leave only footsteps, as the saying goes. We ask that people refrain from taking bicycles, horses or pets into the wetlands (there are miles of other trails at the park where all these things are allowed). If you have a group and would like a naturalist-led hike, please call the office at 303-973-9530.



Photos left: VOC volunteers work to get the trail surface prepared for the crusher fine gravels. Right: Volunteers begin constructing the bird viewing blind and creating the trail that leads visitors into the blind. Photos by Kent Wiley, ASGD board member.

Get involved with conservation work

Adopt an IBA (Important Bird Area) for Pawnee National Grasslands

by Charles Thornton-Kolbe

How can birders and other conservationists get involved with bird and other wildlife conservation at the Pawnee National Grasslands (PNG) located in northeast Colorado?

Several Audubon organizations are working together with the Pawnee National Grasslands administration to sup-

port conservation efforts to protect and expand bird habitat at the Pawnee National Grasslands. The group will monitor the site, assess conservation issues, develop a conservation plan (building off existing plans of the Pawnee National Grasslands), and help implement that plan. Through this more proactive stew-

ardship process, we hope to avoid and address any threats to birds and/or bird habitats at this Important Bird Area.

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN SEVERAL WAYS! CONSERVATION WORK PROJECTS: The PNG has several projects which will help

Getting involved Continued. on page 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-

As 2005 draws to a close, many of us will be planning family gatherings over the holidays. These last months of the year bring opportunities to celebrate with our families and friends and to gather everyone around the holiday table for food, fellowship and fond memories of other times and other places. Often, our thoughts turn to loved ones who have passed on, but whose influence can still be felt in our lives.

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver, more a circle of like-minded friends than a close knit family, holds dear the memories of those who have led the way with their environmental efforts.

One of those leaders was Lois Webster, a Denver Public Schools teacher, and a driving force in forming an Audubon Chapter in Denver. Under Lois' leadership and with the help of her many friends, the chapter grew. Today, many of us who knew Lois remember her dedication and commitment, and to honor her memory we make a donation to a special fund set up in her name. The Lois Webster Fund, now in its eleventh year, provides grants to researchers working on conservation projects.

A contribution to the Lois Webster Fund, the Brick Campaign for the Audubon Center, or Denver Audubon is a wonderful way to honor or remember a family member or friend who has touched your life and demonstrated the very best efforts to preserve, protect, or teach others about nature and the environment.



Thank You!

APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

OFFICE SUPPORT: Nancy Abramson, Willa Brunkhorst, Vincenza DeStefanis, Jeanne McCune, Betty McGinnis, Carolyn Roark

ADOPT-A-PLATTE SURVEY: Ellie Jones, Joyce Quigley, Peggy Roberts, Betsy Weitkamp, Ralph & Emilie Wiersma


SEPT / OCT WARBLER MAILING: JoAnn Bushnell, Marc Goodbody, Helen Hale, Harry Hubbard, Jeanne McCune, Betty McGinnis, Vi Nicholson, Ruth Schoening, Barbara Shissler, Frank Shissler

SPRING APPEAL FOLLOW-UP MAILING: Harry Hubbard, Betty McGinnis, Vi Nicholson, Ann Stark

SCHOOL & YOUTH PROGRAMS: Doris Cruze, Carol Larsen, Urling Kingery, Jeanne McCune, Arlene Raskin, Polly Reetz, Carolyn Roark

BUILDING NEST BOXES: Fred Griest & Doug Hodous

BIRD SKIN PREPARATION: Jeanette & Rebecca Duerksen



**AUDUBON
SOCIETY**
of GREATER DENVER
9308 S. Wadsworth Boulevard
Littleton, Colorado 80128
303-973-9530 • Fax 303-973-1038
www.denveraudubon.org

ASGD STAFF

Executive Director
Susan Smith
ssmith@denveraudubon.org
Office Manager
Rhonda Shank
rshank@denveraudubon.org
Program Instructor
Laura Steigers
lsteigers@denveraudubon.org

ASGD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President Doris Cruze
cruzeduo@aol.com
1st Vice President Jerry Raskin
raskinjerry@qwest.net
2nd Vice President Ann Bonnell
abonnell@juno.com
Treasurer
Carol DeStefanis
carmdstf@aol.com
Secretary
Polly Reetz
reetzfam@juno.com
Lavonne Axford
Tom Easley
teasley1@comcast.net
Melvin E. Emeigh
eemiegh@aol.com
Jo Evans
jocotu@comcast.net
Senator Ken Gordon
ken.gordon.senate@state.co.us
Allison Hilf
ahilf@aol.com
Arlene Raskin
raskinarl@qwest.net
Allen Stokes
allenstokes@aol.com
Kent Wiley
wileysk1@msn.com

MISSION

ASGD is a nonprofit group dedicated to maintaining the health of natural ecosystems through education, political action, scientific research and land preservation, with primary focus on birds, other wildlife and ecosystems of the South Platte River watershed.

MEMBERSHIP

FRIENDS OF ASGD receive the *Warbler* and additional membership benefits. **Members of the National Audubon Society in the Denver Metro Area receive complimentary copies of the *The Warbler*.**

The Warbler is published bimonthly by the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD).

Editor C. Dale Flowers
Flowers & Associates, Inc.
cdale@cdale.com

TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530

Join FRIENDS of ASGD and Receive Discounts on Field Trips and Classes

View Photos and Read Reviews from Trip Participants in Our Trip Scrapbook Online at www.denveraudubon.org/scrapbook.htm



– FIELD TRIPS –

Walk the Wetlands

DATE: Sunday, Nov. 6 9 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 4 9 a.m.

LEADERS: Hugh and Urling Kingery (303-814-2723)
Bob Brown, and Doris Cruze

Pre-registration: Not necessary

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: Parking lot beside Audubon Center at Chatfield. From C470 and Wadsworth, go south on Wadsworth 4.4 miles. Turn left onto Waterton Road. Turn left immediately into the first parking lot, at the Audubon Center sign.

DESCRIPTION: We will hike along the South Platte River and look for winter birds such as raptors, ducks, and seed-eating perching birds. We always find surprises. Dress in layers for the weather. Bring binoculars, field guide, water, and a snack.

– TRAVEL –

Point Pelee, Kirtland's Warbler and Spring Eastern Migrants

Saturday, May 20 to Sunday May 28, 2006

by Allison Hilf

There is nothing like seeing many of North America's eastern warblers in their spectacular breeding plumage. Hearing the birds singing their beautiful songs on a bright spring morning can be spellbinding. The numbers of individual migrants should be impressive as well as the number of species. Twenty five to 30 plus species of warbler are possible.

Join us as we look for many of North America's eastern warblers including the endangered Kirtland's Warbler. With Joey Kellner as our guide, some of North America's greatest migrant traps including Point Pelee and Crane Creek will be explored as we look for warblers, cuckoos, bitterns, rails and shorebirds.

A typical day will find us birding early in the morning with a light breakfast "on the go," lunches will be either sit-down or take-out depending upon location and how the migration is going that day. Dinners will always be sit-down and relaxing. After dinner we'll tally the day's list and talk about the birds seen and what the next day has in store. If there is interest, night birds may be listened for at several locations.

Space is limited, call soon for more information. Pricing information will be available in the next issue of the Warbler.

– TRAVEL –

FAMILY BIRDING IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA WITH NORM LEWIS

July 29 to August 4, 2006

Why not take the children along to one of the most productive birding spots in the United States? Adults and children will be thrilled to see elf owls, elegant trogon, spotted owl, and flame-colored tanager. We have timed this trip to maximize our opportunities

to see hummingbirds, including magnificent, violet-crowned, and blue-throated. A few rarities are also bound to show up. Norm Lewis, our birding guide, will help us find over ten species of hummingbird and many other Arizona specialties. The great thing about all of these birds is that we will have a chance to share our appreciation (and views) of them with our children.



Wiskered screech owls in Ramsey Canyon peer out of their nest.

This trip is designed for families with children from first



A young birder watches wiskered screech owls in Ramsey Canyon.

to sixth grade (older siblings are encouraged to come along) and will provide all family members numerous opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and birding. Unlike other birding trips,

Family birding Continued on page 4

TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS CONTD.

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Anybody, regardless of ability, is welcome to go on any Christmas Bird Count. Christmas counts provide an on-going record of bird populations in late December, and they provide the opportunity for everyone interested in bird-watching to participate, either in the field or at backyard feeders (if they live within the count circle).

*Pre-registration is required—contact count leader.
National Audubon requests \$5 per person to cover the costs of the publication.*

SATURDAY, DEC. 17, DENVER
Contact Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035.

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, DOUGLAS COUNTY
Contact Ann Bonnell, 303-979-6211

OTHER COUNTS:

Barr Lake. Rocky Mtn. Bird Observatory, 303-659-4348
Black Forest. Judy von Ahlefeldt, 719-495-8409.
**Bonny Lake State Park, John Martin Reservoir,
Boulder, Fort Collins, etc.**

For leaders of Denver area counts and other details about them, call the count leader or Denver Audubon, or check these websites: www.denveraudubon.org or www.dFOBirders.org.

For counts in other parts of Colorado check the website of the Colorado Field Ornithologists: www.cfo-link.org.

DENVER URBAN CHRISTMAS COUNT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2006

Usher in the New Year with a day (or half-day) of birding, and get your 2006 list off to a grand start! The Denver Urban Christmas Bird count covers: Platte River from North City limits to Mississippi, west to Buckley Field and Rocky Mtn. Arsenal.

At 5:00 p.m. after the count, we will have a Pot Luck dinner at Casey Davenport's, 415 South High (5 blocks west of University, about 2 blocks south of Alameda). Please call Casey (303-744-0613) or Urling Kingery (303-814-2723) so we can count you in on the chili pot, Urling's brownies, and Casey's hospitality.

DENVER URBAN CHRISTMAS COUNT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2006

COUNT COORDINATOR, HUGH KINGERY 303-814-2723. TO JOIN THE COUNT, CONTACT ONE OF THE AREA LEADERS.

AREA	LOCATION	LEADER	TELEPHONE
1.	South Platte (south)	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
2.	South Platte (north)	Dick Schottler	303-278-8035
3.	Rocky Mtn. Arsenal	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
4.	Commerce City Montbello	Jackie King	303-287-1644
5.	Sand Creek Tollgate Creek	Randy Lentz	303-680-3381
6.	Bluff Lake, & Aurora,	Buzz Schaumberg	303-699-1721
7.	Cherry Creek Res.	Glenn Walbek GWalbeck@comcast.net	720-560-3671
8.	Kent School, S/Hampden	Lynn Willcockson	303-757-7000
9.	SE Denver, N/Hampden	Walt Hackney	303-771-8331 gyrfal@juno.com
10.	Cherry Creek, Dam to Denver Country Club	Paul Slingsby	303-422-3728
11.	Fairmont, Lowry Field	Tuesday Birders	303-979-6211
13.	City Park/Park Hill	Kevin Corwin	303-671-8236
15.	Wash Park/Denver Country Club; Cherry Creek to Confluence; DU; Greater Glendale	Casey Davenport	303-744-0613

Family Birding Continued from page 3

the children's education and recreational activities will be supported by two terrific outdoor instructors—Bill Schmoker and Mandi Prout. Opportunities will exist for parents to bird in the early morning by themselves and during times when the children are engaged in outdoor education and recreation. We will also have many opportunities to share birds, wildlife and the outdoors with our children. For more information on birding, other children activities, and a full itinerary, please go to

www.nestlingtours.com or call 720-320-1974.

Prices for the whole family range from \$2,314 for two family members (a parent and a child) for five nights (\$1,157 per family member) to \$4,464 for family of five for seven nights and with a rental car (\$893 per family member). For more information about how this trip can fit your family and your family vacation plans, please call Charles Thornton-Kolbe at 720-320-1974.



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz

Peregrine falcons in Colorado had a pretty good year in 2005, according to information collected by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. They seem to have produced good numbers of young birds, and Division staff found a new eyrie.

You might remember that ASGD opposed a Wildlife Commission proposal last winter to issue permits to take young peregrine falcons from the wild. The Commission decided to issue four permits anyway, though only to Master Falconers. Seven people applied for the permits, and three received them after going through all the Division's paperwork. Between June 1 and July 31, these three falconers were allowed to try to take young peregrines at eyries that they had specified to the Division, or to try to trap the young birds after they fledged. All attempts occurred at the eyries, and all failed. One falconer fell while climbing up to an eyrie, but he fortunately was not fatally injured.

The Commission will probably go through this whole process again next year, with the added proviso that the permits will now cost \$200 rather than \$20. Audubon Colorado and ASGD urged the Commission to support this increase; we compared \$200 to the cost of a license to hunt desert bighorn sheep, a species that has also been restored in Colorado at considerable cost, as the peregrine was. The \$200 fee was included in the Division's license fee bill that passed the Legislature last spring, and it will take effect January 1. It will be interesting to see what impact it has on the number of permit applications.

Endangered Species—Rep. Richard Pombo has introduced a bill to “reform” the Endangered Species Act, H.R. 3824. It severely weakens all the provisions that give the Act its teeth, including the requirement for recovery plans, critical habitat designation, and use of the “best available science,” which would be defined by the Secretary of the Interior under Pombo's bill. Federal agencies, now required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that their actions don't endanger a listed species, could be freed from this requirement. The Fish and Wildlife Service could exempt individual projects and whole categories of actions and use “alternate procedures” instead.

Possibly the worst part of the bill—but it's a tossup—would require the government to reimburse private landowners if they lose “commercial value” by changing their development projects to accommodate endangered species. This would reward developers who plan the most grandiose – and supposedly most profitable - projects into the most ecologically important habitats. It begs developers to plan projects that allow them to demand payment from the government. Not all would do this, of course, but the system would be wide open to abuse and fraud. The conservationist position is that the government has the right to regulate to protect public health and safety. And that includes a healthy environment with all of its component species.

One of Rep. Pombo's criticisms of the Act is that so few species have recovered. A recent study shows that over half the species listed as threatened or endangered before 2000 have stabilized or are improving. It also shows that species that receive more funding recover more quickly (Surprise!). You can read the study, in Ecology Letters, at www.backfromthebrink.org/inthespotlight.cfm?subnav=story&contentID=4716. And don't forget to call your US Representative and ask them to oppose H.R. 3824.

Criticize the government? I always cringe when I see letters in the paper suggesting that it is wrong and “unpatriotic” to criticize our government. On the contrary, it is the job of people in a democratic society to raise their voices in dissent. It doesn't have to be done in a violent or nasty way, but giving in and “going along” are the first steps to an essentially totalitarian system. There is nothing partisan about calling it like we see it – from intimidation of government employees trying to do their jobs, to weakening of regulations that protect clean air and water, to destruction of wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Last Note on C and D: Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton has calculated that a taxpaying individual would give up about \$25 a year in rebates (NOT refunds—you get those when you overpay taxes) if C and D pass. However, the language in C includes a tax cut if there is a sufficient surplus, which would give Colorado its lowest flat income tax rate ever. Think about this when you vote.

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CENTENNIAL 5270 E. Arapahoe Road 303-694-4616	PARKER 13019 S. Parker Road 303-805-5982
DENVER 1685 S. Colorado Boulevard 303-758-7575	WHEAT RIDGE 3486 Youngfield Street 303-231-9252

Fall members dinner an evening of sharing

The fall dinner was again an evening for rekindling friendships, sharing good food and viewing spectacular nature photos. Our guest speakers, Wendy Shattil and Bob Rozinski, shared their experiences of photographing nature in the San

Luis Valley. They presented images from their award-winning book "Valley of the Dunes." Wendy and Bob's photographs capture spectacular images from the Great Sands Dunes National Park and Preserve.



Wendy Shattil autographs copies of "Valley of the Dunes" for Denver Audubon members.



Bob Rozinski talks with former ASGD president, Ed Butterfield, after the evening's program.

First South American reserve for North American songbird

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and Colombian conservation group, Fundación ProAves, announce the creation of South America's first protected area for a songbird that breeds exclusively in North America. The reserve will protect wintering habitat for the Cerulean Warbler, a striking bright blue and white migratory bird that has experienced significant population decreases in recent years, mainly due to loss of habitat on both its nesting grounds in North America and wintering grounds in South America.

The Cerulean Warbler nests in the eastern United States and Canada from the lower Great Lakes region, southern Quebec and New England, south to northern Louisiana and northwestern Georgia. Within this area, the species breeds primarily in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys, especially in the upper Ohio River Valley in West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. The species also ranges east to New York, Maryland, and Virginia. "This Cerulean Warbler reserve is a ground-breaking step in the conservation of migratory song birds" said Mike Parr, vice-president for Communications at American Bird Conservancy. "This is the first South American preserve designed to protect a bird species that solely nests in the United States and Canada.

"The new reserve currently includes 500 acres of subtropical forest in the Rio Chucurí basin of Santander, Colombia. The area, one of the last natural remnant forest fragments in the region, shelters high populations of wintering Cerulean Warblers. The reserve also contains three critically endangered bird species: the gorgeted wood-quail, Colombian mountain grackle, and chestnut-bellied hummingbird, along with many other threatened and endemic birds.

"The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, cur-

rently up for reauthorization in Congress, provided critical funding that helped to show that this region is important to the long-term survival of the cerulean warbler," said Parr, "this project and others like it provide a strong justification for the renewal of the Act."

The reserve in Santander is the focal point for a continuing regional conservation campaign for the warbler. Another key area for wintering ceruleans, southwestern Antioquia, Colombia, has also been targeted by ABC for further conservation efforts. The purchase was made possible by a major donation from British conservationist Robert Giles, and support from other individual donors.

American Bird Conservancy www.abcbirds.org is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, whose mission is to conserve native wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. It is the only U.S.-based group dedicated solely to overcoming the greatest threats facing birds throughout the Western Hemisphere. ABC believes adequate resources exist to overcome these threats, and that unifying people, organizations, and agencies around common approaches to priority issues is the key to success.

Denver Audubon on the Web

This winter, ASGD is introducing new features on our website: www.denveraudubon.org You will soon be able to make donations, renew memberships, register for field trips and buy items from the ASGD gift shop online. The new web pages will provide 128 bit encryption, making them a secure way to donate or pay for items via the internet.

Corporate matching contribution programs mean double the money for Audubon

Many large corporations have a corporate giving program that provides "matching funds" for employee contributions. If you are employed by or are retired from one of these organizations your contribution to ASGD might be doubled through that program. Here is a short list of some of the companies located in this area who have matching funds programs. Please let us know when you contribute if you are affiliated with any of these corporations.

Do you work for (or retired from):

AllState	Comcast	StorageTek	Wells
Fargo	Patagonia	REI	
Xcel	Coors	US Bank	
Union Pacific	UPS	WB2	
IBM	Intel	JP Morgan Chase	
Target	WalMart	Key Bank	
Burlington Northern Santa Fe		Oracle	
Kroger Company (King Soopers)			



Neil Bachman, an ASGD member, presents Doris Cruze with a check for \$500 from the Allstate Foundation at the volunteer party. Neil is an Allstate employee and applied for the funds on behalf of ASGD. Thanks Neil!

Getting involved Continued from page 1

restore habitat for birds and other wildlife.

- Hauling trash, from refrigerators to tin cans, off of the PNG where target shooting has littered and poisoned the landscape. Mark your calendar for April 22. 4 hours of work, then a little birding.
- Moving salt licks to concentrate cattle grazing to expand mountain plover habitat.

MONITORING: The PNG needs help monitoring their efforts at expanding and enhancing habitat for Mountain Plovers and other short grass prairie species. After training, monitoring will be conducted in May, June and July.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

- Helping target shooters understand where they are allowed to shoot. Training is set for February 24.
- Helping photographers, bird watchers, hikers and other PNG users understand use restrictions in areas where birds are nesting. This includes areas for protecting Mountain Plovers and raptors.
- Expanding educational resources for PNG users, including the development of a brochure that has photos of common birds along with a short summary about each.

PROVIDING PUBLIC INPUT INTO CONSERVATION ISSUES: Continuing a long Audubon tradition of providing public input into the PNG's conservation plans and policies to address wildlife and other management issues.

Want to know more? An expanded description of volunteer opportunities on PNG is available on the ASGD website, www.denveraudubon.org.

If you want to get involved in any way, please contact Charles Thornton-Kolbe at 303-777-7588. This is Chuck's work phone number, but feel free to leave a message at any time. Please consider attending our first kick off meeting on January 18, 2006 from 7:00 p.m. until 8:15 p.m. at Washington Park United Church of Christ (400 S. Williams St., Denver).

NEW

LEICA - "TEST DRIVE PROGRAM"

We now have the following Leica products available to sign out for an in the field weekend "Test Drive":

8 x 42 Ultravid Binoculars

10 x 32 Ultravid Binoculars

77mm Televid Spotter & 62mm Apo-Televid Spotter



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in the Brookridge Shopping Center)

Colorado Bluebird Project

by Kevin Corwin

In just two short seasons the renewed Colorado Bluebird Project has grown dramatically. We are monitoring over 30 trails with over 600 nestboxes, and we have over 60 subscribers on our Bluebird-Babble listserv. Although most of the trails are within 100 miles of Denver, we also have monitors in Ridgway, Sterling, Grand Junction, and other far-flung corners of the state. We “took our show on the road” this year, traveling around the state to provide training and on-site assistance for groups that were establishing and monitoring new nestbox trails. And this season we are able to provide data entry support to monitors who need it to get their results into the two national databases at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the North American Bluebird Society.



A male mountain bluebird collecting food for young. Photo by Robin Bartlett.

If you're interested in getting involved in this exciting project, we're still in need of folks to monitor existing trails, establish new ones, determine the status of some old trails we've discovered, help with data entry, etc., etc., etc. Check out our webpage on the ASGD website, then contact us at our bluebirdproject@denveraudubon.com email. You can also sign up for the Bluebird-Babble listserv from our webpage, no cost or obligation.

Spectacular South Africa

by Becky Beckers

March 1 to 13, March 1 to 16 or March 1 to 19, 2006

Africa! The very mention of the word evokes a primordial response in all of us. For the birder, Africa offers many unique species as well as unparalleled adventure. Our trip to Eastern South Africa will include the world famous Kruger National Park as well as the Kingdom of Swaziland and more.

Most of the trip will be spent in the “veldt” which is a combination of brush scrub, small forest and open areas. In addition to the wonderful diversity of birds, we may see elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards, buffalo and antelopes of all kinds.

Our extension to Victoria Falls in Zambia opens up a whole new area with new birds as well as the mighty falls themselves. Join us this March on a true African adventure. March 1 to 13, 2006 – the cost is \$3,959 double occupancy (add \$500 for single). Extensions available.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, please contact Becky Beckers at www.travelforthebirds.com 303-766-5266 or AgentBecky@aol.com



A wide variety of colorful birds will be seen on the Africa trip.

JOIN US AT THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills Group of the Sierra Club are once again co-sponsoring our Annual Legislative Workshop.

–PLEASE NOTE THE NEW VENUE AND TIME –

The workshop will be held on Saturday, February 25, at First Plymouth Church (At the southwest corner of Colorado Blvd. and E. Hampden Ave) from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm.

Both the Audubon and Sierra Club lobbyists will present information on bills that the Legislature is considering. Their talks will include a question and answer session and will be followed by several break-out sessions. A pot-luck lunch will be served at noon. Members of the Colorado Legislature are invited to speak with us during lunch. This has always been a lively and interesting discussion as well as a chance to speak directly to legislators.

Cost of the workshop will be \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. Mark the date on your calendar—FEBRUARY 25, 2006—and plan to attend! We need your help to tell the Legislature to protect the things Audubon members value: our wildlife, water, air and open spaces.

Please fill out the form below and send it, with payment, to the ASGD office, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128. Make checks payable to: Audubon Society of Greater Denver.

Please plan to join us for a half-day of fun, conservation issues, and good food.

YES! I will attend the 2006 Legislative Workshop on February 25, 2006.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

I will bring: salad bread dessert drink . I am enclosing a check for \$12 or I will pay \$15 at the door

I want to get involved! Please add me to the ADGD email listserv to receive conservation alerts.

I cannot attend the Workshop, but here is my donation to ASGD to support our effort at the Legislature.

To reserve a space at the Legislative Workshop, mail this form and your check by Feb 1st to: ASGD, 9308 S. Wadsworth, Littleton, Colorado 80128. You can also call the office at 303- 973-9530 or email us at info@denveraudubon.org. Please specify what you will bring to the pot-luck.

backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



HUMMINGBIRDS GALORE! August and September featured an unequalled influx of hummingbirds into the Denver area and beyond – we heard that the same thing happened all over the eastern U.S. Generally speaking, urban/suburban Denverites see a few hummingbirds in their yards, for a few minutes. This year they saw lots, and they stayed. From the inside out – starting with south Denver, Joy Schieving recorded broad-tails (one or two) from July 26 to the end of August (and beyond, I presume – her September notes didn't arrive by the Warbler deadline). Joy also saw a calliope July 28-29.

KIMBERLY MOORE, in Thornton, saw, among other August broad-tails and rufous, two calliopes Aug. 14. The calliopes, she reports, “were getting nectar from the coral bells and visiting red ivy geranium, and not at all interested in the hummingbird feeder. That’s good. I’m sure the natural food is better for them.” But it’s OK to supplement the natural food. Perhaps our supplements, whether of the garden variety or the sugar water variety, help to support these gems when the natural flower sources fade from stresses induced by drought or other causes. Keeping the feeders full into October or November does not persuade them to linger longer than they should and may help some strays.

BROAD-TAILS STAYED THROUGH AUGUST at Nan Brehmer’s on Green Mountain. Cat Anderson’s hummers arrived in Cherry Hills in mid July. Usually “they show up for a couple of days in September. Three neighbors have them as well, and many other people in Cherry Hills report them, too.” Tina Jones, custodian of the champion wildlife yard in metropolitan Denver, has them every year. During August she saw two calliopes for two days, a black-chinned for six days, plus broad-tails and rufous. Out in the hinterlands of Franktown, Karen Metz hosted the same four species as Tina, and we had broad-tailed, rufous, and calliope. This morning (Sept. 25) Urling saw one broad-tailed at the feeder, and the agastache, now in full flower, still pulls them in to feed on every other trumpet-flower.

TINA, ON AUGUST 19, heard a begging Cooper’s hawk, but when she went to investigate (they nested within two blocks) she saw a young black-capped chickadee imitating the Cooper’s. “The bird kept on calling like a begging Cooper’s for a while, and the call was incredibly loud.” In our yard, we’ve heard both adult and immature calls – both from real Cooper’s and from Steller’s jays. We think that young black-headed grosbeaks have a begging call akin to the Cooper’s wheedle. By mid August the grosbeaks become mobile, and Kevin Corwin, in Centennial, had a visit “by what I guess must be a first-year male black-headed grosbeak. He has the wings, back, breast, and belly of a male, but his head has the supercilium and crown stripes of a female.”

KEVIN MENTIONED SOMETHING that few of us think to notice or to comment on. “Neither the red-breasted nuthatch

that was a regular in my yard last year nor the white-breasted nuthatch that was an occasional visitor last year have been here at all this summer.” Often we don’t notice birds that aren’t there, though we do remark on the unusual ones.

LIZ WILLCOCKSON, IN SOUTHEAST DENVER, saw a real Cooper’s. “As luck would have it, Lynn and I were both in the kitchen not far from the window when we heard the thunk of a bird hitting the sliding glass door in the dining room. Then we saw a Cooper’s hawk fly to sit on the top of one of our porch chairs, obviously collecting himself after the flight into the glass. After a few moments he flew down to the edge of the porch and the next thing we knew he came back onto the porch with a flicker in his grip and sat on the porch (concrete) for a short spell before flying out into the world with his supper.

“**AS WE ANALYZE THIS**, it seemed that the hawk had made a pass at the flicker which was on one of the feeders, kept the same trajectory and ended up flying into the glass door. It was quite a sight to see a Cooper’s hawk sitting on the back of the chair where Lynn often sits when we eat supper outside!”

JOY ENJOYED ONE TO FOUR AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES all summer for the first time. Her bushtits continue to zip through the yard and she saw migrating, one each, western tanager, yellow and Wilson’s warblers, western wood-pewee, and red-breasted nuthatch. We haven’t seen many migrants in Franktown except for one eastern kingbird and several western kingbirds, and piles of sparrows – chipping, Brewer’s, vesper, lark, and in September, white-crowned. Over in Castle Rock, Glenn Walbek emailed vivid pictures of a Sept. 23 blue-headed vireo (the now-split eastern version of solitary). We did welcome our first winter arrival when a Townsend’s solitaire took up his post on Sept. 17. Now the hillside has at least two singing and piping their ventriloquial note.

IN THE LARGER WORLD OF COLORADO BIRD WATCHING, Prewitt Reservoir, between Brush and Fort Morgan, hosted several hundred shorebirds for at least a month. Prewitt had the most noticeable irrigation drawdown that produced a lot of mud flats for them. Stilt sandpipers and killdeer dominated. Birders also saw dozens of pectoral, buff-breasted, solitary, spotted, semipalmated, western, least, Baird’s, sandpipers, sanderling, dowitchers, Wilson’s and red-necked phalaropes, and black-bellied, American golden, and semipalmated plovers. A long-tailed jaeger stayed for two weeks, followed by a parasitic jaeger. The number and diversity of these shorebirds exceeded that of any other year that I can remember. However, one little sandpiper caused a great hullabaloo, Colorado’s first or second record of a stray from Siberia: a curlew sandpiper, found by Joey Kellner, that spent five September days there and attracted almost as many bird watchers as sandpipers.

WITH FALL COMING ON, the gulls will start to arrive at Cherry Creek Reservoir; annually it attracts a surprising number of species. The run started in September with several Sabine’s gulls among the usual Franklin’s, ring-billed, California and herring gulls; look for another five species in November.

Backyard Birds continued on page 10

Prairie dog conservation

by Leslie Johnson

Douglas County Citizens for Wildlife is a newly established non-profit organization, dedicated to the preservation of our local natural resources and native wildlife. Most recently, our focus has been on the fate of several prairie dog colonies slated for removal or partial removal in Highlands Ranch. Prairie dogs are a keystone species, upon whom approximately 160 other species depend at some level for their survival. In recent times, prairie dog populations have been reduced to 1-2 percent of their historic numbers.

Recognizing the inherent value of the prairie dog, we have been in negotiations with Highlands Ranch Metropolitan Districts in regard to their open space prairie dog management policies. Metro Districts uses the term "relocation," a misleading term for vacuuming and/or trapping prairie dogs. These prairie dogs are subsequently killed and frozen as food for black-footed ferrets--or caged for up to one month for live-feeding purposes. For the short term, Metro Districts has agreed to cease thinning of interior prairie dog colonies on open space land. They are going to proceed with the removal of prairie dogs that are within 50 feet of houses and 30 feet of trails. With help from ASGD, Sierra Club and other organizations, we have persuaded Metro Districts to create a citizen task force to work alongside Metro Districts in revising their current prairie dog management plans. We would also like to

see Metro Districts implement the use of visual barrier methods, such as opaque fencing and native grasses, to discourage prairie dogs from encroaching on private property.

Unfortunately, the news is not as hopeful for approximately 200 prairie dogs slated for lethal control, including poisoning, on Highlands Ranch residential property soon to be developed by Shea Homes. With support from the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, Prairie Preservation Alliance and Prairie Dog Action, we have repeatedly requested that Shea Homes relocate these animals to targeted suitable habitat at little or no cost to them. To date, Shea representatives have refused to relocate animals, and have been unwilling to discuss non-lethal alternatives.

We urge you to make a difference. Citizens are increasingly speaking up in defense of native wildlife species such as the prairie dog. We *can* send a clear message to policy makers and developers that we will not stand idly by while our last remaining natural resources are eliminated.

Please help us to save the prairie dog and dependent wildlife by signing our online petitions at our website, www.dccwildlife.org and send us an e-mail at to see how else you can help!

Leslie Johnson is a citizen activist in Highlands Ranch who is concerned about prairie dog conservation in the area.

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Join The Team ASGD needs you!

by Arlene Raskin

Your Audubon Society of Greater Denver is forming a new team to create a more inclusive organization and increase our effectiveness in serving our membership and the changing demographics of metropolitan Denver.

ASGD has a history of serving diverse student populations reaching back at least as far as our innovative and award winning Urban Education Project of the early 1980s. We have also recognized the need to design a more effective diversity strategy, and we have addressed this imperative in a variety of ways. Our efforts to recruit staff, volunteers, membership and board members representative of the demographics of metropolitan Denver have fallen woefully short.

To help design a new strategy and become a more inclusive organization, we recently attended a Denver Foundation workshop. The Foundation has produced a mini-module workbook and shared this with us. The board is committed to this effort. Carol DeStefanis and Arlene Raskin are co-chairing the project. We need a few good men and women to join us in this important initiative. Please call Rhonda at the office to volunteer to assist in this exciting and worthy effort.

Backyard Birds Continued from page 9

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Audubon has set a deadline of the 25th of alternate months (September, November, etc.), so try to get your reports to me by the 20th. Drop me a note or post card at P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me, ouzels@juno.com.

ASGD Bird Collection looking for additions

ASGD maintains a collection of study skins - dead birds that are stuffed and preserved - for use in education programs. The study skins give students the opportunity to observe birds' field marks and adaptations in detail. Children can feel the curvature of a beak or examine the differences between feathers. They discover the beautiful markings of common neighborhood birds that they never took notice of before.

Because our collection is constantly in use by school groups, the study skins need to be replaced from year to year. ASGD never kills birds for our collection, but relies on birds that are discovered shortly after natural death and donated.

For instance, if you find a bird has died after hitting a window

at your home, you can preserve the specimen and bring it to ASGD. The bird will then become an important teaching tool and help inspire children to study birds.

To preserve a dead bird for a study skin, simply wrap the bird in plastic wrap or newspaper. Put the wrapped bird in a sealed plastic bag in your freezer. Call 303-973-9530 to arrange a time to drop it off at ASGD. Please do not keep birds that are showing signs of decay because they will not be usable. Make sure to note the date and location

where you found the bird. ASGD reports this information to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a requirement for our wildlife salvage permit.



Students study bird skins in ASGD workshops on bird adaptations, neighborhood birds and beginning bird watching.



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In-Kind Gifts

Neil & Jill Bachman donated a fax machine, printer & scanner.

Marlene Berra gave two bird feeders, two bird houses and bird seed.

Charles Butcher & Rhonda Shank donated a computer monitor.

Michael D. Clifford donated approximately 120 bird books that belonged to his father Colonel A.E. Clifford.

Joyce Comin gave five birdfeeders.

Maurice & Judith Mitchell donated two pairs of binoculars, aspotting scope, A/V screen, slide projector, slide viewer, microphone & screen pointer.

Bob Turner donated books for our library.

New Friends Members: Darlene Cate, Bill Eden, Lydia Garmaier, Leslie Gerard, Gina Gerken, Dale & Rose Getty, Diane & Jim Graham, Teresa Gurth, John Harrington, Mary Keithler, Chris Landry, Patty O'Neall, Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Janet Sacks, David Showalter, John W. Shupe, Scott & Linda Trauth



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